

U.S. Department of Justice
Immigration and Naturalization Service

TESTIMONY OF

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SUBCOMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT MANAGEMENT, INFORMATION AND
TECHNOLOGY

Regarding

THE INTERNATIONAL TRADE DATA SYSTEM

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Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for providing this opportunity to describe the participation of the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) in the development of the International Trade Data System (ITDS) and to offer our perspective on the relationship between ITDS and various facets of immigration operations and policy. My statement will be brief, as the gathering and analysis of trade data clearly is not a core mission of INS.

INS is, however, required to monitor the movement into and out of the United States of non-U.S. citizens who trade in goods and services. INS is the agency which authorizes the lawful employment in the U.S. of non-U.S. citizens under numerous provisions of the Immigration and Nationality Act. It enforces the provisions of that Act in relation to aliens who violate our laws by accepting unauthorized employment. These responsibilities necessitate the provision of data by INS to those departments and agencies with direct responsibility for reporting and analyzing trade data. INS experience in the use of technology for examination and tracking of applicants for admission to the United States has also been used in development of those components of trade automation systems that relate to the entry into the United States of drivers and other operators of commercial transports. The result is a fully automated and fully integrated system for cargo tracking and entry. This system does not require separate immigration processing of various classes of cargo handlers who are required to cross international boundaries in the course of their work. The ITDS will enhance INS ability to consistently and accurately verify the immigration status of cargo drivers and their crew each time they enter and exit the country.

INS comes to the ITDS project from a framework of highly productive cooperation and coordination among the agencies principally responsible for managing the movement of persons and goods into and out of the United States. These agencies--INS, the U.S. Customs Service, the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service of the Department of Agriculture, and the Bureau of Consular Affairs of the Department of State--jointly have developed and operate a *sophisticated* information technology and database management platform, the Interagency Border Inspection System or IBIS, to support operation of our ports-of-entry. Similarly, these agencies have collaborated in a, highly productive Border Process Reengineering project to eliminate mission and operational overlap and to streamline, focus, and coordinate agency activities.

INS has profited greatly from this approach to border management and brings this experience to the development of the International Trade Data System. We look forward to continuing to provide design input and operational support to ITDS and to development of more timely and effective methods for transfer of relevant INS data to our ITDS partners.

This concludes my testimony. I would be glad to respond to any questions which you may have.